

Community Food
Agriculture Coalition
OF MISSOULA COUNTY

COMMIT 19
DATE 2.17.11
127 N. Higgins, Suite 307 D 542
Missoula, MT 59802
(406) 880-0543

February 17, 2011

To: Rep. Gary MacLaren, House Local Government Committee Chair
Rep. Michael More, House Local Government Committee Vice Chair
Rep. Michele Reinhart, House Local Government Committee
Rep. Wayne Stahl, House Local Government Committee
Rep. Dick Barrett, House Local Government Committee

RE: Please oppose HB 542 to "Generally Revise the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act."

On behalf of the Community Food & Agriculture Coalition (CFAC), I ask you to vote against HB 542, entitled: "an act Generally Revising the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act," sponsored by Rep. Esp and requested by Rep. Stahl.

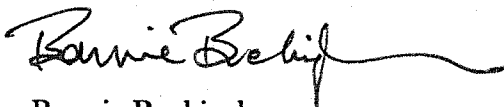
CFAC takes particular issue with the revision to the *agriculture* review criterion on page 4, line 18. The revision would delete the word "agriculture" and replace it with "surrounding agricultural operations." This subtle revision would have enormous consequences for Montana's farming and ranching communities.

The legislative history clearly shows the intent of the 1975 amendment, which authorized local subdivision review and established review criteria, was to encourage local governments to consider all of the impacts to agriculture, including the surrounding operations as well as the agricultural land base.

The purpose of the subdivision review criteria should still be honored by the 2011 Legislature. Agriculture is still Montana's leading industry, and the agricultural land base is the foundation of our working farms and ranches. Why would the state now decide to prevent local governments from considering the impacts to agriculture?

CFAC opposes other areas of HB 542, but we wanted you to be fully aware of the *agriculture* review criterion, and its importance to Montana's rich agricultural heritage and a local community's ability to plan for a legacy of working farms and ranches.

Sincerely,



Bonnie Buckingham
Executive Director